

# I KNOW, BUT I DON'T KNOW: Contemplation of Death

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A talk given to the monks at Bodhinyana Monastery 20 December 2000

*Sabbe sattā maranti ca marimsu ca marissare, Tath'evāham marissāmi, n'atthi me ettha samsayo.*

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Many of you will recall that *gatha*, which I chanted in Pāli at the beginning of this talk. It means, 'All beings will die, they are of the nature to die, and I too will also die, of that I have no doubt'. It's one of those beautiful chants which we have in Buddhism. It relates to the fact that every one of us will die. I will use this contemplation of death for today's *Dhamma* talk.

In particular, this afternoon, I was thinking about the block of land, which we are purchasing opposite our monastery. I thought what a wonderful thing it would be if we could use some of that land as a Buddhist crematorium. The monks can go there in the evening and just contemplate death, next to, or even inside, the crematorium. Contemplation of death is part of our tradition.

## The Illusion of Life

I told the lay people, who are soon going to accompany me to India and then to the North East of Thailand, to Wat Pah Nanachat, the monastery where I spent so many years, that if they are lucky, there's a good chance that they might see a Buddhist funeral. There the body of the person who has died is not sanitised by embalmers. It's just put into a very simple coffin so that everyone can go and look at, and even touch, the person who has died. It is then burnt out in the open. The very cheap wood of the coffin quickly burns away to reveal the body. The body burns away part by part, bit by bit, and you can see the members of the body come apart from each other. You can see the skull pop and explode, and all the other parts of the body eventually just being burnt away. After many hours, all that's left are the bones. To be able to see death in the raw is a marvellous privilege in one's life. By sanitising death we are preserving the illusion of life.

The illusion is that life will go on forever. The whole purpose of life is just the seeking of pleasures and amusements, and the accumulation of wealth. In the perspective of death, all of those foolish things, which we do in life, appear so obviously stupid. We see them as things that are completely worthless.

We heard recently of a couple of monks who disrobed. If only they could have gone to a funeral, and been able to watch a body being burnt, they might have been able to see themselves in those flames. That will surely happen to them one day. All of the searching: for sensory pleasures, for having relationships, getting married, having houses, accumulating wealth and cars, having experiences, going up the Amazon, or trekking in the Himalayas; what does all that mean in the face of death?

## Asoka's Brother

One of my favourite anecdotes on death is the story of Asoka's brother. [1] Asoka was the Indian Emperor who became a Buddhist. Asoka had a brother, named V'asoka, who seemed completely unspiritual, and was into sensory pleasures. Being the brother of the Emperor afforded him many opportunities to indulge in them. In order to lead his brother into understanding the *Dhamma*, Asoka set a trap for him.

As I re-tell the story, with some literary licence, the Emperor was in his bath while his robes and insignia were laid outside. Asoka had arranged for some of his close advisers to be walking with his brother and, as if by accident, to come through the bath house. Pointing out the Emperor's robes just lying on the bench, the advisers said to Asoka's brother, 'Why not try these on for size? Who knows? One day when your brother dies, you will probably be Emperor. Try them on. Go on, it will be alright'. At first the brother would not do it. He knew that it was illegal to do so. But in the end his pride got the better of him. Who wouldn't like to dress up in the Emperor's clothes? It was all pre-planned, and so as soon as he was dressed in the Emperor's clothes, the Emperor Asoka came out of the bathhouse and caught him!

The Emperor asked: 'What are you doing? Are you wearing the throne? Are you a traitor?' Because this was a crime

The Emperor asked: 'What are you doing? Are you usurping the throne? Are you a traitor? Because this was a crime, the Emperor said, 'Even though you are my brother, I have to administer the law impartially. The penalty for this is death.'

Despite his own brother's desperate pleas for mercy, the Emperor insisted on maintaining the law and having his unfortunate brother killed. However, he added, 'Seeing you are my brother, and you would like to be Emperor so much, for the next seven days you can enjoy all the pleasures of an Emperor. But you will have none of the responsibilities. You can enjoy my harem. You can have whatever you want to eat. And whatever entertainment I enjoy, you can enjoy as well. The pleasures of the Emperor are yours for seven days. But after seven days, you will be executed'. Then the Emperor left.

After seven days, the Emperor Asoka summoned his brother to the place of execution. The Emperor asked him, 'Did you enjoy the harem, all those beautiful girls? Did you enjoy the best food from my kitchens? Did you enjoy my musicians and other entertainers?' The brother looked down at the ground, his shoulders drooping and said, 'Could I enjoy all that? I couldn't even enjoy one night's sleep. How can you enjoy anything when you know that you are soon to be executed?'

The Emperor smiled and said, 'Now you may understand!'

Whether its seven days, seven months, seven years or seventy years, how can you enjoy the pleasures of the senses, such as: sex, sport, movies, travelling or accumulating possessions? How can you enjoy all that when you know that you are going to be executed? Whether it's seven days, seven months, seven years or seventy years, soon you are all going to be dead.

Through this experience, the brother learnt much of the *Dhamma*. He became a devout Buddhist from that time on and kept the precepts. His insight into the meaning of death made very clear that which is important in life.

### **I Know, but I Don't Know**

The Buddha wanted his monks to contemplate their death in the same way. It is as if you are all going to be executed! Life is a death sentence! We are all on death row in this monastery, but we don't know how the execution is going to take place, and we don't know exactly when. A weaver's daughter once responded to a series of questions from the Buddha, by answering, 'I know, but I don't know'. The Buddha smiled and acknowledged her wisdom. Someone asked her afterwards, 'What do you mean by you know, but you don't know?', and she replied that she knew that she would die, but didn't know when she would die (Dhp-a, XIII. 7).

Insight into death rearranges your priorities. So what is important for you? You are soon going to die, and after your death you are going to be carrying the *kamma* of this life into your future lives.

Any person who doesn't believe in rebirth is going to get a great shock when it happens. It's true. Reincarnation is real. You will soon experience this for yourselves! Embracing the reality of your death and subsequent rebirth gives you a different perspective on how to live your life.

As monks, we have the ten reflections for one who has gone forth. The tenth is a reflection on our deathbed. (An X, 48)<sup>[2]</sup> It is traditional to ask a monk on his deathbed, 'What states of *Jhānas* have you achieved? What stages of liberation, or Enlightenment have you reached?'

Good monks do not tell even their friends about such attainments, unless they are close to death. That's why it is an old tradition to ask monks that question only on their deathbeds. I encourage you to do the same. Ask your fellow monks when they are near death, 'What have you achieved? What have you realized?' Such questioning brings back a sense of urgency to what we are doing in this monastery. We don't want to live for years and years in this or other monasteries, going from place to place in the Buddhist monastic world, and then find at the end of our life that we are no further along the Path to Liberation than when we started. We don't want to find that we haven't made proper use of this wonderful opportunity to experience a *Jhāna*, or to at least achieve Stream Winning. I say this because if you don't realize these things in your life as a monk, after death who knows what might happen?

### **Throwing Up a Stick**

In one of the stories from the *suttas*, the Buddha said that your future rebirth is so very uncertain. It's like throwing a stick into the air. You can't be sure which end it is going to fall on. In the same way, you can't be certain after death if you will fall into the fortunate realms or the unfortunate realms! (Sn 15. 9)

That impressed me. But it also scared me, when I first read it. We all think that if we make lots and lots of good *kamma* then we are certain of a happy rebirth. And you do make good *kamma*, because you are all good monks. You keep the precepts very well. The novices are good, they are great novices. Even the visitors who come here are all very high minded. They are pure minded beings for the most part. As beings in the world go, you are the cream. However, even if you live a very good life, even if you are a monk for many years in this life, if you don't penetrate to Stream Winning then you can't be certain what rebirth is going to follow!

All that you can achieve by making lots of good *kamma* is to make one end of the 'stick' heavier. Then the chances are

it will fall on the heavy end, and your good *kamma* will ripen into a beautiful rebirth. But the *sutta* very clearly says that even though one end is heavy, every now and again that stick will land on the lighter end. So, even if you make lots of good *kamma*, the bad *kamma* that you have performed, either in this life or in previous lives, is still there. Because of that bad *kamma*, which hasn't been used up yet, there is always the chance of being reborn in a very unfortunate rebirth.

That is the fear of *samsāra*. It's not just old age, sickness and death in this life. *Its also, old age sickness and death in future lives*, in less pleasant lives than the one you are in now. Even though you may be a good monk, a good novice, or a good lay person, it's still uncertain what your rebirth is going to be. This fact makes you put forth more effort on your spiritual path. It makes you more diligent. Where does diligence come from? Where does that effort come from? It only comes when you see how dangerous rebirth is.

## Letting Go

I gave a talk last night to lay people about the meditation on letting go, of just doing nothing. To be able to do nothing, you have to be able to understand that doing nothing is important. That letting go within the mind is valuable. Just sitting down meditating is a matter of life and death, more important than any other business. Meditation is more important than our finances, our relationships, our children, our vehicles, or our possessions. It is more important even than going out and working for the community. It's more important than everything else because it's the only way to make an end of suffering.

Accumulating wealth, what meaning has that? It all disappears when you die. Indulging in the pleasures of life, even if you manage to get them in great amounts, usually just bring lots of frustrations. If you do get lots and lots of pleasure in this life, so what! It always disappears in the pain and fog of old age. One of the things that you notice in life, as you get older, is that most of the pleasures in life occur early on and the pain of life is what you're mostly left with at the end. Knowing this, seeing the dangers in life, why does anybody get involved in all this wasting of time?

We can go around teaching others, or writing books for others, and spreading the *Dhamma*, but is that really our duty in this life? So many people are spreading the *Dhamma*, but *so few people are realising the Dhamma*. Sometimes you wonder what we are spreading anyway. If you don't realise the *Dhamma* for yourself, you run the risk of spreading muck around. And people will take up that muck, thinking that it's *Dhamma*. Sometimes people give teachings on muck, and everyone thinks how Enlightened they are; but it's all muck *Dhamma*. It's not real *Dhamma*. They haven't realised the *Dhamma* for themselves. That's a great shame for this world. We don't really need people spreading *Dhamma* as much as *we need more people realising that Dhamma*.

## The Purpose of Life

When you start reflecting on death, everything starts to become so clear. You realize how foolish you have been. During my life I have wasted so much time, when I really didn't have time to waste. When I look back on my early years as a monk, I did waste too much time. But fortunately I had enough good meditation as well. Now as a forty-nine year old monk I can't afford to waste any more time.

I look at all the opportunities young monks have, and sometimes, well, they don't make good use of those opportunities. They don't hang around in their huts, or on their walking paths for hour after hour, walking and sitting, walking and sitting. They don't use the time in between walking and sitting to study the *suttas*, and to contemplate their meaning. If you are wasting time, isn't that a shame!

Here we have one of the best monasteries in the world and some of the best facilities. Of all the monasteries that I have been to, this is one of the best. It's as good as it gets. Sometimes, just living in a forest takes so much effort. In the forest monasteries that I knew in Thailand, you had to spend so much of the day just walking the long distance for the alms round, and then working in the monastery in the afternoon. The time for seclusion to meditate was very limited.

So, reflect on the following: 'I don't know how long I'll have these facilities. I don't know how long I'll be healthy enough to do this'. There are enough monks here with bad backs or bad knees, bad this and bad that. If you're a healthy monk, or even a reasonably healthy one, if you can sit meditation, cross your legs and straighten your back without too much pain, you are extremely fortunate. You won't always be like that. *Use this opportunity now!*

It's not just your body that is going to die, your good health will die, your energy will die, and your opportunities will die. So reflect on death, as it says in the *suttas*, as if your turban was on fire. In other words, death gives precedence to the practice, and it makes the Eightfold Path<sup>[3]</sup> the most important thing in the world. It gives the Path priority over everything else. It would be wonderful if people had that understanding of death to the degree that they embraced it all the time. It would be wonderful if they had that mindfulness, which remembers that death is always stalking you. Death can happen at any time!

Therefore, what's important to me is to develop the Eightfold Path as much as I can, as deeply as I can, so that I can experience the *Jhānas*. It's important that I can experience the Paths and Fruits of this practice. It's important that I can be free. Free first of all from the lower realms, and eventually from rebirth altogether. Otherwise death becomes very scary, even for great practitioners. They can fall so easily if they haven't got this security from bondage, this security from all bad rebirths. We use these reflections on death to generate a sense of urgency.

As we travel the Eightfold Path, we should not use force. We don't 'do' the practice, it is something we allow to happen.

We renounce all other business in our lives. I've often noticed that if you just allow this path to happen, it happens so beautifully, so powerfully and so effectively. The problem is we don't allow the path to happen. We are too busy doing other things. It's quite clear what we are supposed to be doing.

We know the section of the Eightfold Path about virtuous conduct; Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood. Everyone in this monastery, even if you are in this monastery temporarily, can tick off those three parts of the Eightfold Path. You're fulfilling them, that is of course, as long as you are keeping the rules and the precepts of this monastery.

Now as to Right Effort, (it is unfortunate that we have to translate these terms into English), as soon as you say right effort, people think of striving and struggling, and forcing and controlling, and doing. If we can somehow turn our minds to effort without doing, to a practice of letting go, then we have gained some deeper understanding about what right effort truly means. It's the effort to let go, not the effort to add to or to get rid of, that is one of the hardest things for the Western mind to get around. Often people waste so many years and so much of their time just trying too hard.

It's the *Arahants*, and the people who have great wisdom, who have no difficulty. Those of you who have studied Pāli, come across this again and again. *Jhānas* are easy for the wise; they are attained with no difficulty. You should reflect on how these states can be attained without difficulty? It is because those people know the path to entering the *Jhānas*. It is the 'no difficulty' path. So don't make it difficult! If you can let go, disentangle yourself from the past and the future, then there is no difficulty. Let the past and the future die for you, so that you've only got the present moment. Let all thinking die. Then there is no difficulty. What does it mean when you die to all your past? All the things you worried about, and all the concerns about the past, it's all gone. And as for the future who knows?

### Into the Light

*The present moment is the only thing that you ever have.* When you die your body and all your concerns, are taken away from you. What were you worried about? Let it all go. Allow your thinking, thinking, thinking, to die. When a person's dead, they are brain dead, there's no brain activity. When a person dies, often in the first moments after death, there is that silence of the mind, before the mind made body can start to name things, and start to conceptualise about what they are experiencing. For the first few seconds or even longer, it's a time of silence, a different type of perception. This is similar to what one can do in one's meditation, let go of that inner chatter, allow it to die, as if *you are dying*. Many people when they have been close to death have had spiritual experiences. In many traditions, they have experiences of dying to the world and becoming wise afterwards. The experience which *Theravāda* monks of our tradition have is that when they get into *Jhānas*, they die to the body and become wise to the nature of the mind.

That experience of allowing every thing to disappear is so similar to the process of dying, that the reflection on dying can very easily be incorporated into the practice which leads into *Jhānas*. Die to the past and future. Die to the thoughts. Die to the body, and eventually die to the breath. It's as if you take your last breath as you are meditating. In other words your body becomes as still as a corpse, you completely let go of the breathing, and go into the *nimitta*. It is just like that when a person dies. They go out of their body into the light that is the same as the *nimitta*.

Really we're talking about an *amata* state (a deathless state). *Amata* is a word that is used in Pāli. The word death, *marana*, is always about the death of the body. The death of the mind is called *Parinibbāna*, but the death of the body is always *marana*. The past participle of that is *mata*, dead or died. But do you know what really doesn't die? If you've contemplated this through deep meditation, you know it is this stream of consciousness. It's that which carries on after death. In that sense, the stream of consciousness is *amata*, because that is beyond the physical death. It's that which can be reborn in the *rūpa* realms (material realms) or the *arūpa* realms (immaterial realms). However, that's not the end of things. I think that word *amata* was popular in the time of the Buddha because, like most people even today, when they talked about some sort of salvation, it was very much a materialistic idea. It was the idea of going into a state of *amata*, of deathlessness, where they could 'be' forever and ever and ever, without having to worry about death. Some sort of heaven realm, some sort of eternity realm. Perhaps the way the Buddha used the word *amata* was taking it from common usage and giving it a different meaning. But from experience, what doesn't die is the stream of consciousness, the *mano viññāna* or mind consciousness. In *Jhānas* you can actually know what mind consciousness really is as an experience.

In the *Jhānas* it is as if the body has died along with all the conceptions of the world, all feelings, everything that is concerned with the world and the body. So really the *Jhānas* are death-like states, in the sense that the body has gone, it has disappeared. The worlds of the past and future have gone, they have disappeared. All your possessions have gone, they have disappeared. All your thoughts have gone, they have disappeared, along with all the struggling and doing. The coming and going, has gone, they have disappeared. Can you understand me? Can you understand what the word 'death' means? It means transcending this body. It is letting go of the body. The problem is of course, that most people when they die go and get born again, and then they have to die all over again. They keep on doing that because they don't fully die to the world, they die a little bit, *but they still want to experience some more*.

So you have to learn how to develop the meditation of letting go, that effort which abandons all the plans and busyness, all of those little fetters, those little knots, which tie you to this worldly body. It's fascinating to sometimes reflect on

just how wisely you've spent your day. What's occupied your mind today? Do a statistical analysis. How much of your mind has been occupied today with the body, or with the world, or with the monastery, or with your own affairs? And how much has been occupied with the affairs of the deathless? That will give you a good idea of why you're not getting

Enlightened. We have to be more occupied with the deathless!

## A Place of Simplicity

I've been struggling for many years to try and make this monastery a place where you don't need to worry about much. To organise it so that all of the basic human needs are provided for. Out there in the world people have to struggle so much just to survive, to have a house, and food to get by. It's so complex out there. The whole ethos and meaning behind the monastery is to be a place of simplicity. A place where the time you spend looking after this body, feeding it, washing it, and housing it is so little, that you can devote the majority of your time to the deathless, that which lies beyond the body. However people always tend to make life more complex. They always make things more difficult: taking the body from one place to another, getting it healthy, feeding it, and washing it, or whatever else it is that we do with our bodies. There is so little time left for the mind. When we've developed the perception of death, and its opposite, the deathless, we can incline and spend more time on that which is beyond death. Even though you may not have experienced those states yet, in this life anyway, there is something that recognises the existence of the state of mind that is beyond the body. By just knowing that much, it's like a whiff of scent. It is enough to show you what direction to go.

Remember that all the doing, which we think is right effort, keeps us with this body, keeps us with the past and the future; so it is not the correct type of doing. It's effort which leads to more entanglements. The effort which leads to letting go is remembering that this doesn't belong to me. It is *cāga*, giving up and abandoning. That's why this monastery can be a prison if you don't want to be here. But if you're completely content here, if you're completely happy, then it's not a prison any more. It's contentment that frees you. Letting go is thinking that it doesn't belong to me. I'm content with whatever's happening. Its *anālaya*, or freedom from attachment. It's the Teflon mind, nothing sticks to it, nothing can land on it, and its *patinissagga*, always giving up, relinquishing; going in the opposite direction to attaching. It's actually throwing things off rather than allowing things to land on you and to ingratiate themselves with you. That's the effort to let go. *That's the effort that leads to the transcending of death.*

When you let go of all these things, everything disappears: the body goes, the world goes, the huts go, the books go, the illnesses go, the Buddhist Society of Western Australia disappears. Everything is gone, and you realise what monastic life is all about. The holy life, at least the start of it, is all about going into the realms of the mind. And if you have got into *Jhānas*, an insight that comes automatically after those *Jhāna* states is that the stream of mind consciousness has died to the body. There has been a separation. It is just like the Christian idea of the soul leaving the body. It is the stream of consciousness that leaves the body, not physically, because these are different planes. The realm of the mind, mind space, is not something that you can measure in physical space. It is a parallel universe if you like, but that parallel universe, the mind space, is independent. It is completely unaffected, if it wants to be, by the four dimensional world of space and time.

## *Nibbāna*

To know that much means that there will never be a fear of death, because you know what death is. It's the death of the body. It's the death of the five senses, the ending of that entire world outside. Such understanding gives you a different perspective. It is one of the greatest treasures, one of the greatest happinesses, that you have ever found. All the pleasures of the world seem to be so useless, so trivial and petty. You really wonder why you've been messing around: with relationships, with sex, with getting married, with accumulating wealth or keeping wealth. What a foolish thing to do spending your life running around, backwards and forwards, when you could have these beautiful blissful states of mind! That's why I've always encouraged people by hook or by crook, somehow or other, to get a taste of those states. One taste will change your life and give you a different perspective. Even though it may have been only one taste many years ago, you can't forget that. You can't ignore it because it's a powerful transforming experience. It gives you an idea an experience of what is possible, what it means to let go of the *kāma loka*, the world of the body, the world of, birth, old age sickness and death.

When you look at the world of the mind, you see that the mind doesn't get old, and it needn't get sick. The mind really only gets sick if you let it get sick. That's why the Buddha said that even though the body is sick, the mind does not need to be sick. (Sn III, 1) So even though the body gets sick, don't let the mind get sick too. The stream of consciousness can be completely above that. If you can do just that much and completely let go of the world of the body, then you will at least be an *Anāgāmi*, a Non Returner. When you die you will go up to the realm of the mind, play around there for a few aeons and from there, *Nibbāna*. I shouldn't really say this, but it's not a bad way of exiting from *samsāra*. The Buddha would quite rightly criticise me for advocating any type of existence, even in the *Anāgāmi* realms. The Buddha says it's just not worth it, it's best to *Nibbāna* as soon as you can.

*Nibbāna* is like another level of death. It is the end of the mind. Ordinary death is the death of things relating to the body, the death of this world, the losing of all your possessions, and separation from what you loved. Old age and sickness, they're just the messengers of death, the precursors, just the signs that death is coming. 'Death is coming!' It's just like the first bills you get, the first reminders, saying if you don't pay within a few days you are going to be taken to court. They're the warning notices, and then suddenly it just comes.

Old age and sickness, they are all part of death. It's amazing how people can completely neglect and deny those warning signs. They get old, old, old and they think they're still going to live for a long time, they get sick, sick, sick

and they think they are always going to get better. These are the warning signs that: 'Death is coming. Death is coming. Death is coming.' If you've got a bad back today, that's a warning sign that death is coming. If you have a headache, or stomach ache, if you feel a bit low in energy or even if you've just had a cold, that's death coming. Always remember that. These symptoms are like death knocking on the door, you may not be quite ready yet, but it doesn't really matter. Death will just break in, like a home invader, and drag you away, *whether you are ready or not*.

## Summary and Conclusion

So it's good to be ready. You do that by preparing to let go of this world. This world is useful in as much as it provides a means for the holy life to be lived. This body is useful in that it provides a vehicle for you to be able sit down and meditate, and gain the *Jhānas*, and the consequent insight that enables one to leave *samsāra*. That's the whole purpose of the body, the purpose of the senses, and the purpose of this life. However people who don't know the purpose of life, the meaning of life, just waste their time and do foolish things. They go around and around, like children on a merry-go-round, thinking that it's so good, so wonderful and so enjoyable. Doing the reflection on death again and again, allows you to let go of a lot of the useless pursuits in your life.

Even those of you who are senior monks in this monastery, what do you really want to achieve? You might die tonight. What's important to you? Is it finishing off that letter, or is it meditating and getting into *Jhāna*. You may only have another week or two, who knows? What's really important to you? Just before your death do you want to look back and be able to say: 'I've used this life properly? At least I've had a *Jhāna*, (or even better) I've got *Magga Phala*, the Fruit of the Path.' Then you can die at ease, and you've used this life as it's supposed to be used. You've made the best of your opportunities. So be diligent. Know the Path, and know what works!

Make that effort, which is a letting go. Remember, 'this doesn't belong to me'. The body doesn't belong to me. This monastery doesn't belong to me. My letters doesn't belong to me. My family doesn't belong to me. My past, my history, don't belong to me, and neither does my future. You own nothing in this world. Death teaches how little you really own. The body belongs to nature. The past belongs to fantasy. The future belongs to stupidity. You own nothing. All your thoughts belong to your conditioning. You own nothing, nothing, nothing. My robes just belong to the earth. All the possessions in my hut belong to the earth as well. All that is mine will one day go to the rubbish dump. It will be incinerated.

I thought when I first came here, that I would build this monastery strong so that it would last for hundreds and thousands of years. And already you can see it is falling apart. Cracks are appearing in the walls of your huts. The monk who told me he saw cracks appearing in the wall of his hut should look at his own body and see the cracks right down his own body. We're falling apart. We're crumbling. Soon we'll be dust like that hut.

When we look at things in this way, we get everything into perspective. The crack in the wall of your hut is showing you death. You're grateful to the harbinger of death for encouraging you to let go and develop the deep meditations. You are dying to the body, dying to world, and dying to the defilements that keep you in that world. You are liberating yourself, owning nothing, and being content with owning nothing. When you're content, you need nothing. When you're content you're dead to desires. When people die you write on their gravestone, 'Rest in Peace'. When you're in *Jhānas* you are resting in peace, and *Nibbāna* is the only true peace.

These are some reflections about death, reflections about *Nibbāna*, reflections about the body, the world and the mind. So please be diligent, life is fading away so fast.

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[1] Adapted from the *Asokāvadāna*, John S Strong: New Delhi, Motilal Banasidass, 1989. □

[2] The Ten Reflections of a Monk: (AN10, 48) □

1. I have entered a life beyond caste or class.
2. My life is dependent on the generosity of others.
3. My conduct must be different from that of a lay person.
4. Do I reproach myself in regard to virtue?
5. Do my wise fellow monks reproach me in regard to virtue?
6. I must be separated and parted from all that is dear and beloved to me.
7. I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions ...

8. How do I spend my days and nights?
9. Do I delight in solitude?
10. If I am questioned about my attainments by my fellow monks at the time of my death shall I be dismayed?

[3] The Eightfold Path consists of:

(Wisdom)

1. Right View or Understanding.
2. Right Thoughts or Intentions.

(Morality)

3. Right Speech.
4. Right Action.
5. Right Livelihood.

(Mind Development)

6. Right Effort.
7. Right Mindfulness.
8. Right Concentration = *Jhāna* □

Source : <http://www.bswa.org>